

MINEHEAD URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH'S REPORT FOR 1950.

The Registrar General's figure for the population of the town is 7,331; the figure for 1949 being 7,232 and for 1948, 7,249. It is probable that during the summer holidays this figure is more than doubled. The usual seasonal increase usually commences in June and continues until September. The bulk of the hotels, boarding houses and apartments close down for the winter. The health of the community during the year under discussion was, on the whole, good.

Vital Statistics.

	Total.	M.	F.
Live Births - Legitimate	85	48	37
Illegitimate	11	7	4
Birth Rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population	13.09		
Deaths	Total. 127	M. 48	F. 79
Death Rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population	17.3		
Death Rate of Infants under one year of age:-			
All infants per 1,000 live births:-	10.4		

Water Supply.

This has been on the whole satisfactory throughout the year. The main supply from Nutscale Reservoir was always in full supply as well as the subsidiary supplies from Broadwood, Longwood and Longcombe.

Temporary shortages occurred in the Periton and Hopcott areas due to heavy consumption in lower levels of the town during the height of the season. Arrangements have been made to correct this by making a new connection to the trunk main feeding the town. The work will be put in hand as soon as the necessary materials are available. This should result in a maintenance of the pressure in the areas affected.

The quality of the water supply to the town is satisfactory. As the supply to the town consists of a mixture of treated and untreated water it is not possible to classify the bacteriological results separately. Of the 47 samples examined bacteriologically 31 were in all respects satisfactory; 16 were not in all respects satisfactory. Amongst the latter was a private supply to a number of houses derived from a hillside spring. Representations made to the owners resulted in the substitution of a pure supply.

The Council's Consulting Engineers have been conferring during the year concerning a long-term plan for sterilisation of supplies and storage. They have had interviews with the Ministry of Health's Engineer (A.R.Vail, Esq., M.Inst.C.E.) on these subjects.

Further progress with the plan evolved is in abeyance pending publication of the Ministry's report on the water survey of Somerset.

No action has been taken in respect of any reported contamination as any such action involves the every extensive alterations at present under consideration. Any attempt to deal with the water supply piecemeal would be uneconomic and probably ineffective.

A slight degree of plumbo-solvency detected in one part of the supply will probably come under review when the Byelaws affecting this matter come into force on the 1st February, 1951.

All the dwelling houses (2,319) in the town are supplied from public water mains direct to the houses.

### Swimming Pools.

There is one swimming pool situated on the sea front which is privately owned. This pool is filled with sea water which undergoes chlorination before being admitted to the pool. The filtration and chlorination plant are under skilled management and the engineer is on duty the whole of the time the bath is in operation. Frequent testing indicates that the water carries the necessary amount of residual chlorine to ensure a safe bathing water. Of the 24 samples taken and submitted for bacteriological examination only one was not entirely satisfactory.

### Sewage Disposal.

No sewerage works have taken place during the year. The lower parts of the town still suffer considerable inconvenience owing to the inability of the existing sewers to deal with heavy storm water.

The question of dealing with storm water drainage is one that calls for priority as the inconvenience will increase out of proportion to the growth of the town.

Another matter in this connection which requires consideration is the sewage outfall. The Council has knowledge of these matters and is giving them consideration.

### Food.

No outbreaks of food poisoning have been reported during the year.

### Meat and other Foods.

Meat is prepared for human food at the Minehead Abattoir, from where it is distributed throughout the districts of Minehead, Watchet, Williton and Dulverton. So far as is practical, all animals are inspected before slaughter and all carcasses and offal are inspected in accordance with instructions laid down in Memo. 62 Foods, and appropriate action taken where required.

All places where food is prepared, etc., including the Abattoir, shops, stalls and vehicles, are inspected from time to time and action taken as required. Generally, the cleanliness of these establishments and vehicles is satisfactory.

### Carcases Inspected and Condemned.

	Cattle excluding cows	Cows	Calves	Sheep and Lambs	Pigs
Number killed(if known)	731	363	851	9,459	254
Number inspected	731	363	851	9,459	254
All diseases except Tuberculosis Whole carcasses con- demned	6	8	8	44	1
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned	142	212	6	463	9
Percentage of the number inspected affected with disease other than tuberculosis	20.24%	60.60%	1.63%	4.60%	3.93%



	Cattle. excluding cows	Cows	Calves	Sheep and Lambs	Pigs
Tuberculosis only. Whole carcasses condemned.	9	7	1	-	1
Carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned.	17	65	-	-	5
Percentage of the number inspected affected with tuberculosis.	3.55%	19.83%	0.11%	-	2.40%

### Milk.

The milk supply during the year was satisfactorily maintained. Samples taken from time to time that did not come up to the required standard were investigated and the cause ascertained and remedied.

- (a) The total number of Registered Dairy Farms was 5.
- (b) The total number of Retailers was 5.
- (c) The number of supplementary licences issued to dealers or distributors whose dairy is outside this area was Nil.

Eleven samples were taken of Tuberculin Tested milk and were all found to be satisfactory.

### Manufacture of Ice Cream.

The regulations governing this manufacture and the requirements implicit in them have tended to restrict the preparation of ice cream to the large wholesale houses. The distributors find it more profitable to purchase their ice cream in bulk.

Nine samples of ice cream submitted for examination during the summer showed that the bulk of the ice cream was of a relatively high grade.

### Housing.

The total number of houses is 2,319. Thirty-four houses were erected during the year; twenty-eight by the Local Authority and four by private enterprise. Two dwelling-houses were converted into flats. Seventeen houses were in course of erection at the close of the year.

As to the housing requirements in the future, your Surveyor informs me that no estimate can be given of the number required until a survey of all existing property and occupants is made. As to whether living conditions are unsatisfactory no reasonably correct statement can be made without the survey mentioned in the previous sentence.

One case of overcrowding was found and satisfactorily dealt with.

122 houses are reported as unsatisfactory in that two families are occupying the same house.

The total number of applicants for Council Houses at the end of the year was 160.

### Factories Act.

The Register of Factories has not been kept and is at present incomplete. No report on its administration can therefore be included in this report.

### Overcrowding.

As far as is known no statutory overcrowding exists.

### Infectious Diseases.

Minor epidemics of measles and whooping cough occurred during the year under discussion. There were no deaths. Only one case of Poliomyelitis was notified during the year and was removed to the Taunton Isolation Hospital.

Cases requiring institutional isolation are sent to Taunton Isolation Hospital.

### Tuberculosis.

Tuberculosis again shows a drop in cases notified. Seven were recorded against eight in the previous year. There were five deaths.

All cases of Tuberculosis are dealt with at the Tuberculosis Clinic.

Disinfection of premises after infectious disease is carried out by the Local Authority, also after cases of an unhygienic or unpleasant nature.

### Hospital.

The Minehead & West Somerset Hospital is entirely administered by the Bridgwater, Minehead & Butleigh Management Committee.

Local representation in the management of the Hospital exists in the House Committee of the Hospital. This Committee is responsible for the day to day supervision of the Institution and is empowered to make recommendations and representations to the Committee of Management. The Committee of Management is represented on the Committee by three of its members.

### Ambulance Services.

During the year under review the ambulance services vested by the Ministry in the County Council have been carried out by the St. John Ambulance Brigade to the entire satisfaction of the community. Under the arrangement with the County Council the cost of the running and maintenance of the ambulances is the concern of the County Council. Two full-time trained ambulance drivers are maintained. The remainder of the Service, which includes all night work, is carried out by the local ambulance and nursing divisions. This part of the Service is entirely voluntary and maintained with the financial support of the general public.

### Clinics.

Clinics, with the exception of Infant Welfare, are now held at the Minehead & West Somerset Hospital.

Until the accommodation is complete at the Minehead Hospital the Tuberculosis Clinic will remain at its present habitat.

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The year under consideration has been conspicuous for its lack of sunshine. This, however, has not been reflected to any marked degree in the health of the community. An analysis of the vital statistics shows that the total deaths registered were 127. This is an improvement on the previous year when the number was 143. The death rate is 17.3 compared with 19.77 for 1949. The total live births were 96 compared with 88 of the previous year.

With regard to the deaths occurring in age groups, 88 occurred over the age of 70, and of these 49 occurred between 70 and 80; 29 between 80 and 90 and 10 at 90 and over. It would seem that of the 127 deaths only 39 failed to reach the three score years and ten.

Of the causes of death there is nothing very startling to note. Cardiac and circulatory diseases accounted for 52; vascular lesions of the nervous system 19; Cancer 12; Pulmonary Tuberculosis 5. Proportionately they are much as in the previous year although decreased in number. No special inference can be drawn from their consideration.

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In conclusion it is necessary to draw attention to the important work that lies before the Council in order to maintain and improve the efficiency of the services implicit in public health.

The water supply has occupied much of your attention and the magnitude of the work necessary for the efficient storage, distribution and sterilisation of the ample water supply, becomes clear.

The problem of the surface water in relation to sewerage has also been under your consideration and calls for early priority.

Lastly the necessity of a complete survey of the existing property and its relationship to the occupants. Without this survey it is impossible to have any clear conception of the circumstances affecting housing and public hygiene. All these matters are urgent and should be dealt with in order of priority in conjunction with the supply of material and labour inherent to the undertaking.

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Finally, I must express my appreciation of the Council's co-operation and patience in dealing with the matters that I have brought before them and to its servants for their courtesies, co-operation and help in all matters dealing with the Public Health Department.

W. BAIN,

M.B., B.S., Lond.

September, 1951.

